PHIL
EAGLES
WOAH, BOY!
Coca-Cola

Winter's Gold Zine

Christmas was a quiet affair.

Dally sat in the armchair, his legs thrown over the armrest as he flicked through the pages of a magazine, humming every so often when he saw something he found interesting enough to deserve acknowledgement.

Two-Bit sat with his legs crossed, a plate full of mac and cheese and chocolate cake perched precariously on his knee as he watched a holiday re-run of Mickey Mouse, his eyes starry as the next segment started.

The quiet lull of Pony reading Gone With The Wind to Johnny contrasted nicely with the soft but joyous giggles Steve and Soda were exchanging as they laid on the couch, legs tangled together and arms around each other.

Their noses were almost touching as they whispered and laughed, obvious adoration in both of their expressions. Evie watched them fondly, her legs crossed as she continued sketching them.

Darry was cleaning up the dining table, the gentle clinking of dishes filling the silence of the kitchen. Paul sat atop the counter, swinging his leg as he watched Darry work, fingers itching with the urge to help out, mind reminding him Darry didn't want help.

He liked cleaning up, it soothed his worries.

Ace was curled up on the weathered rug, her curly hair falling into her face as she snored quietly. Bev sat right beside her, tracing shapes on her girlfriend's back, her short blonde bob now long enough to pull back in a braid.

Marcia had her head on Two-Bit's shoulder, and she alternated between watching the cartoon that had him entranced and stealing glances at her boyfriend.

Cherry exited the bathroom and returned to her spot beside Randy, continuing the conversation that had been briefly paused, occasionally eyeing Dally with barely concealed curiosity.

Despite the small house, it didn't feel crowded with everyone squeezed together, it felt homely.

It had only been natural to invite the guys over, especially after Paul's return to Darry's life. Truth be told, the previous Christmas had been missing more than just their parents - it had been missing Paul at the table, exchanging jokes with Mr. Curtis and helping Mrs. Curtis clean up afterwards.

Two-Bit of course invited Marcia, after running back to pick up the number he thought was phony and calling her. It was really the only reasonable decision, inviting his girlfriend to their annual celebration.

Ace had the same reasoning. It had been difficult, forgiving Bev and moving past her awful actions, but the soc wore her down, and she didn't want to spend the holidays without her by her side.

And Pony had been getting along so well with Randy, he had practically begged to invite him over for Christmas, and no one could deny Pony's desire to make new friends.

And with Randy came Cherry, who had been planning to spend her Christmas with her family. But Paul and Bev both got invited, so she decided to spend it with friends instead. Only Marcia was going too, and the only person she really knew outside of her was Randy, her ex boyfriend's best friend. So she was going to hang out with him, until he got the invitation.

It would have been rude to exclude her, not to mention the fact she helped them after her boyfriend's death, and she got along so well with Ponyboy. So the youngest Curtis sent her an invitation, which she excitedly accepted.

And even with the new developments in Steve and Soda's relationship, Evie was understanding and promised she didn't hate them and she in fact loved them.. It made sense to invite her as well.

Of course, Evie usually would have spent Christmas with Sandy and Sylvia, but Sandy was gone, and she wasn't a fan of the new guy Sylvia had trailing behind her, drooling like a dog, so she opted to spend it with her boyfriends who were boyfriends. A much better choice, too.

It was a small fit, and Dally occasionally vocalized his disdain at having his haven invaded by "those rich, stuck-up snobs", as he put it, but a warning look from Darry shut him up.

Even he didn't feel like starting a fight during the holidays.

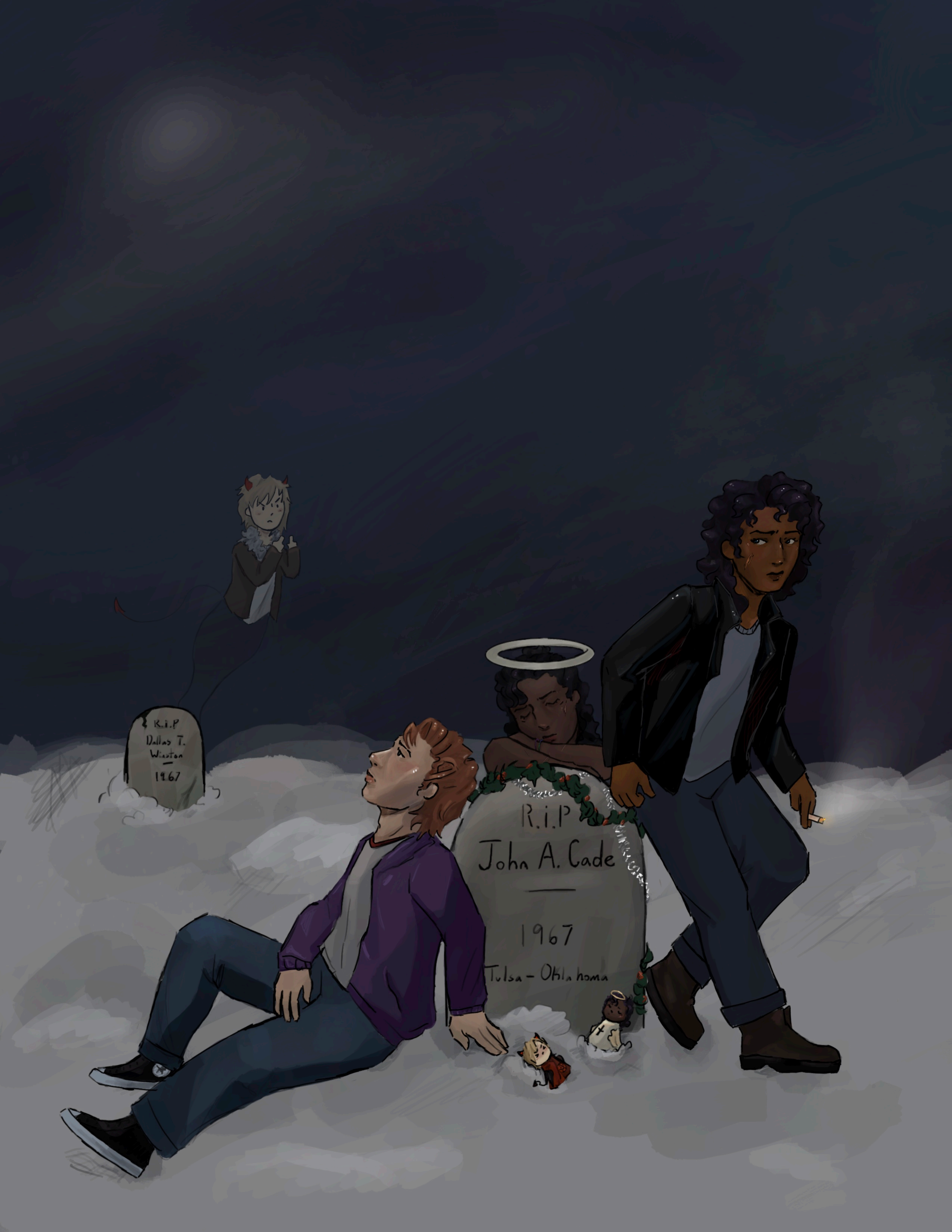
It wasn't the most exciting celebration, even when Marcia and Paul started bickering about who had the better boyfriend and Darry and Two-Bit had to separate them.

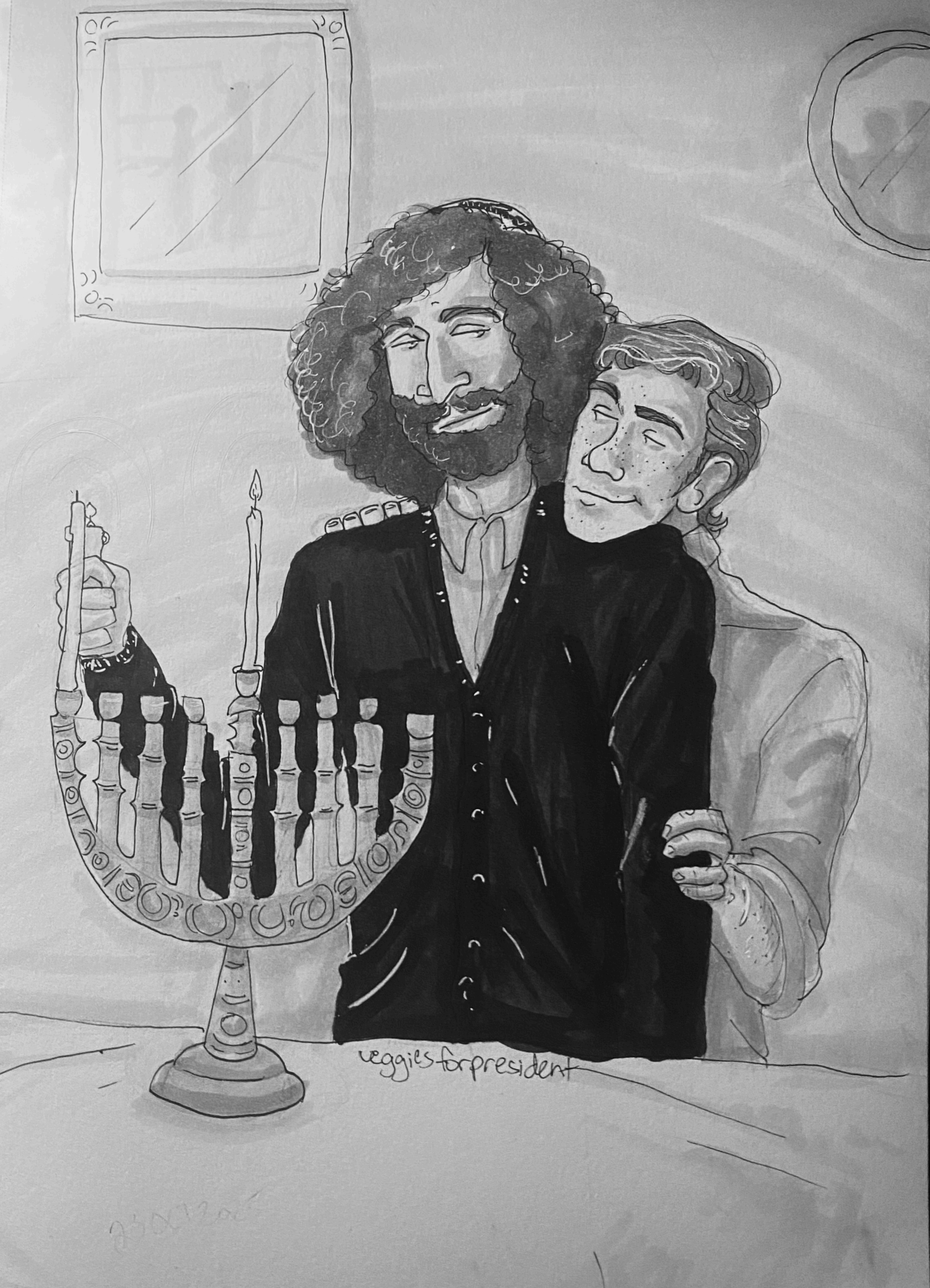
(It didn't help when both Steve and Evie joined the argument, and Soda did nothing to stop them, occasionally throwing in tips and cheering when Evie made a particularly good point about Steve, even as he turned the color of the glass ornament on the tree when his name was brought up by either of them.)

Darry eventually returned from cleaning up, albeit a bit exasperated with his friends.

There were several lively conversations, and Pony convinced everyone to go outside for a snowball fight. Johnny sat on the porch, watching as his family played, and he saw, just for a moment, how all their worries that aged them so fast seemed to reverse, and the youthfulness they temporarily lost returned.

By the time they went in, shivering with red noses and cheeks, they all knew it would be the best Christmas celebration of their lives.


R.i.P
Dallas T.
Winston
1967
R.i.P
John A. Cade
1967
Tulsa - Oklahoma


veggiesforpresident

"I think—and I could be totally wrong, don't take my word for this—that you *might* have made too many cookies."

"Ya think?" Cherry deadpanned, staring at the trays that coated Bev's counter. "Where'd you even get all these trays?"

"Mom's a baker, remember?" Bev pulled another sheet of cookies out of the oven, wincing as the hot metal grazed her hand.

"Why did you make so many, anyway?"

Bev shrugged. "I just felt like it."

"You made them for Ace, didn't you?" Marcia grinned, wiggling her eyebrows.

"Hush up!" Bev grabbed a napkin and balled it up, tossing it at her friend. "She came over the other day and mentioned that they don't get many cookies for Christmas-"

"-so you made her some!" Cherry clapped her hands excitedly. "Oh, Bev, that is *so cute*!"

"Not you too!" Bev hid her rapidly reddening face in her hands. "I just thought I'd help out, ya know?"

"Okay, okay, we'll stop teasing you." Marcia leaned over the counter, staring at the snickerdoodles. "But only if you share."

Bev snorted, pushing the tray towards Marcia. "Bribery? Really?"

"No one is above some tasty bribery," Cherry quipped, grabbing a cookie herself.

"Hm. Sure." Bev grabbed a container and began piling cookies into it.

"Would your brother want to bring some to his ex?" Marcia asked through a mouthful of snickerdoodle.

"Ew, Marc, have some decency," groaned Bev.

Cherry paused, considering the question (and ignoring the bickering). "Probably, but Ace would share hers, and Darrel would think Paul is taking credit for your cookies, and they've only just started talking again."

"So, no."

"Yeah, no." Bev nodded towards a container. "Help me put these away, and then we can go do something else."

As Marcia grabbed a container, Cherry picked up a gingerbread cookie.

"Bob used to love gingerbread," she said softly, holding the cookie like it was holy.

"Are you doing okay? What, with this being your first Christmas since…?"

Cherry shrugged, not looking at either girl. "I'm fine. I mean, it's hard. Paul's having a hard time too. But I don't know. It feels…"

"Yeah?" Bev set down the bag she had been putting the containers into and stepped closer, putting her hand on Cherry's shoulder. "We won't judge you."

"No, I know." She sighed. "I don't know. It's almost like life is easier now that he's gone. And I feel so bad saying that, but it's true."

"I get it." Marcia assured her.

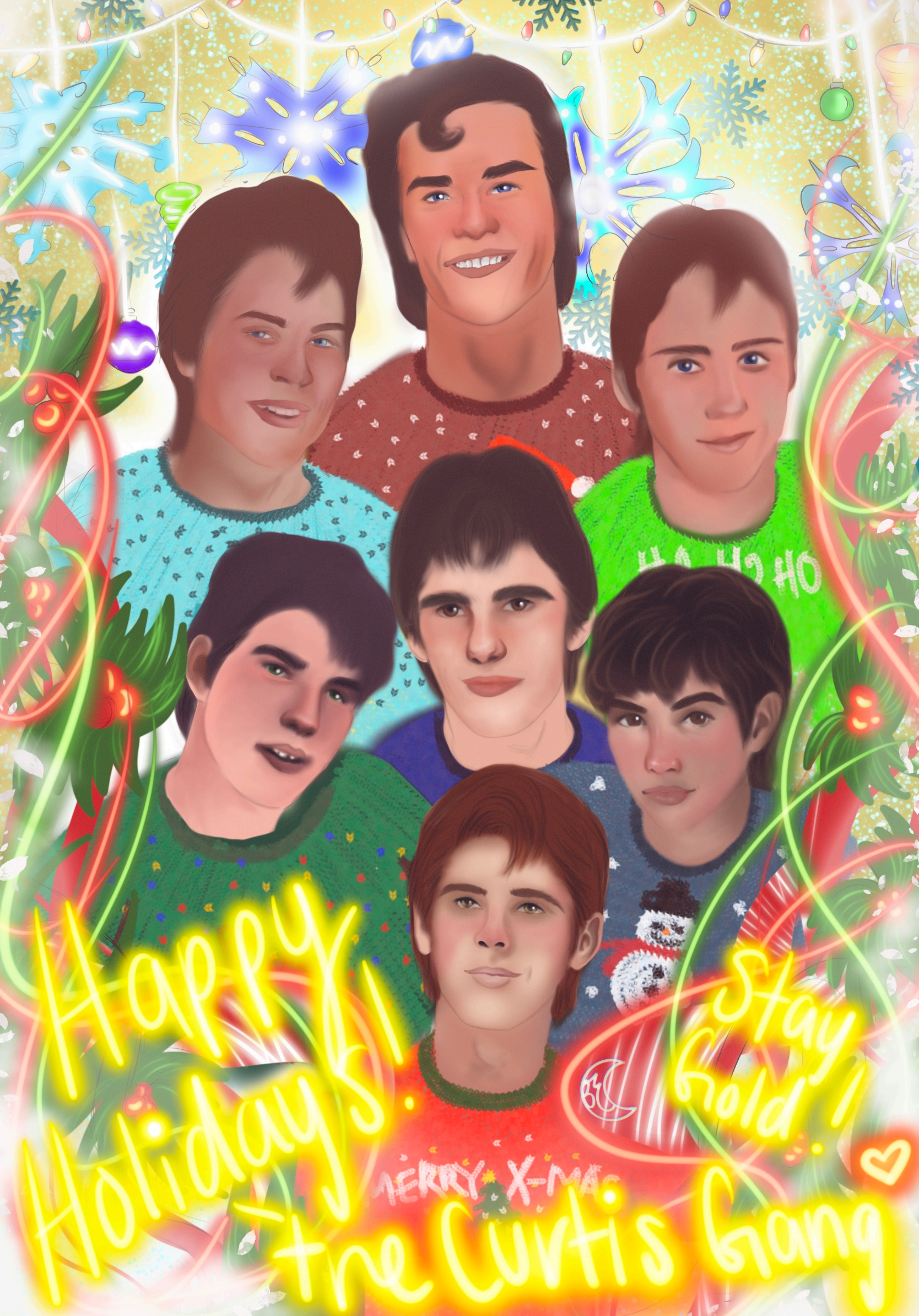
"Me too. I know I kinda betrayed you, but I grew up with him. Paul and I were just… shocked he could be taken from us so soon. We needed someone to blame."

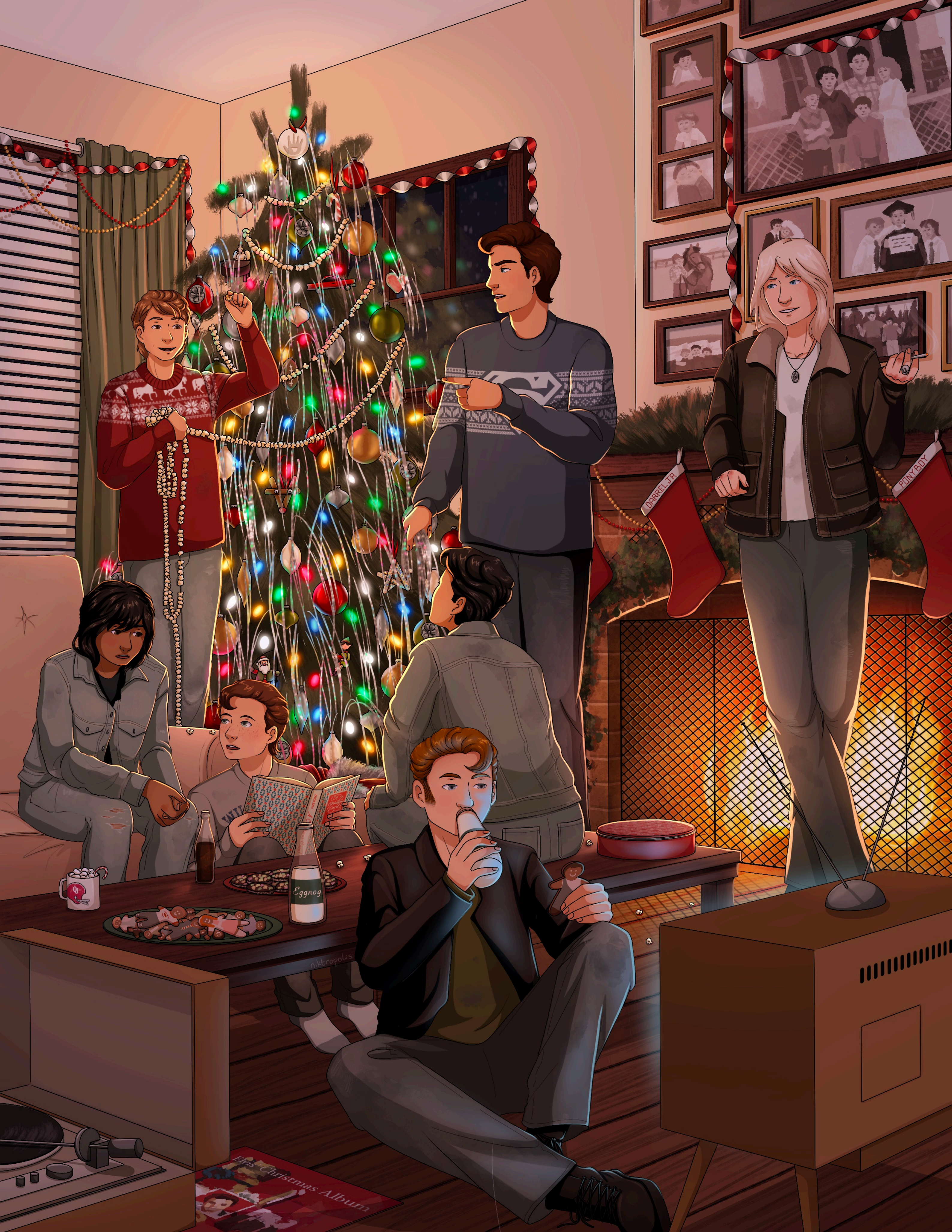
"I know." Cherry sighed. "I understand why you did it."

"C'mon, let's get you thinking about something else." Marcia clapped her hands, leading them into the living room. "Like Bev's hopeless love life-"

"Or Marcia's greasy boy toy," Bev cut in, mocking.

“Keith is *not* a boy toy, Beverly.”
“You didn’t deny he’s greasy,” Cherry noted, grinning.
“Shut up!” Marcia nudged her with her shoulder, laughing.
“Wait, hopeless?” Bev frowned, catching onto Marcia’s word choice.
Marcia and Cherry both stifled their laughter, and Cherry hooked her arm with Bev’s.
“C’mon, Holden, let’s go finish up those cookies.”


HO HO HO
MERRY X-MAS
Happy Holidays!!
Stay Gold!
-the Curtis Gang


DARREL JR
PONYBOY
Eggnog
niktropolis
Elvis' Christmas Album

First Christmas From Home

Dallas had never felt air like this. The cold weather he was used to was humid and freezing. The kind of cold that seeped deep into your bones and made you want to shiver right out of your skin. That was New York Cold. He'd never felt cold like this. Sure, it was still freezing and his face that was half caved in didn't seem to help matters but it wasn't cold like that. The snow that was falling lingered in his hair and all around his fading leather coat.

He was sitting at some gas station after being dropped off by the bus. He didn't have anywhere to go and was still planning out his next move. He didn't even know if had the energy to think over the pain that coursed through his body. His face was all messed up, underneath his hair, he knew that. His rib cage seemed to be stained black and blue and his breathing was off, the cigarette he was puffing on didn't help much at all.

He was sure he looked wrong hunched over on the bed in the snow and cold of… Oklahoma? Where was he? Whatever, his goal was to get as far away from that gang as possible and this was just the first step.

"Son, are you alright?" Dallas flinches, hard before turning to see a man standing there with his son. He looked like a cowboy with his boots and button up shirt.

"Yeah…" Dallas trails off, feeling uncomfortable. Was this normal? Did people just go up and talk to other people here? He'd been taught from a young age not to talk to strangers and this guy was just talking to him out of nowhere? There's no way that he didn't want something.

"Looks like someone got you real good in the face." He mimes a hand over his face and Dallas nods.

"It's Christmas Eve!" The son comes forward a little bit, a small grin on his face. He had blonde hair and cowboy boots too. He was buzzing with excitement. "Why don't he come home with us Dad?" Dallas looks back and forth between the two of them. What the hell?

"Unless you were planning on spending the night out in the snow?" The man says with an amused look on his face. Dallas mulls it over in his head for a minute. This could be a trap, they could be trying to hurt him. But on the other side, he didn't really think they'd do something like that in this hick town. A cowboy with a cowboy son probably wasn't going to murder him. He'd die either way if he spent the night curled up on the bench outside the gas station.

"Ain't no place for a twelve year old. You're much too skinny, you'll be frozen solid by the end of the night!"

After some mental debate, Dallas nods, stubs out the cigarette and follows the two of them to the man's truck. "My name is Darrel Curtis and this here is my son Sodapop." Dallas gave him a double look to make sure he had heard right but the so-called Soda*pop* was grinning at him.

"Birth name and everything." He says, still grinning as he stares crazily into Dallas's eyes. Dallas just nods slowly, trying not to get freaked out. Did people normally smile that much? "What's your name?"

"Dallas, like the city." He says softly, the inside of his mouth still hurt from where his cheeks had been slammed and scraped against his teeth. How strange was it? He thought he was going to die in that alley with those real life gangsters and now he was sitting on the bench seat of some hicks truck.

“That’s real cool! I’ve never been to Dallas…” Dally tunes him out, letting the boy talk. He didn’t seem all that much younger than him but it was best not to get close either way. It didn’t seem like they would report him back to the guys in New York but you could never be too careful. He wasn’t really a fan of getting his ribs caved in on a good day. Tuning people out was a skill that he learned early on when his parents used to fight. Though as much as he tried, he never could get the sound of his Mom’s head being slammed into the wall by his dad. Not that any of that mattered now. They were in the ground now, the ground in *New York.*

“-sure you don’t need a hospital? That cut’s pretty messed up.” It’s Mr. Curtis talking, Dallas must have zoned out but he shakes his head decidedly at the man. He wasn’t going to a hospital. They could report him to CPS or the police or whoever if they found out he was a minor, then Dallas might be shipped back to the very place he was running from… A shiver ran down his spine at the very thought.

“I’ve had worse.” It was a simple way to answer it but Mr. Curtis and Sodapop both looked stricken. Dallas couldn’t help but to notice how they had the same eyes. They both seemed to dance with uncertainty and concern as they looked at him. Dallas just pointed his own eyes back out the windshield. He wasn’t a fan of being dissected like a frog or stared at like he had a disease. That’s how it felt, even if Mr. Curtis was trying to drive.

“I think it looks cool.” Sodapop says softly. “Ain’t never had a black eye before.” Dallas couldn’t help but to crack a grin at that, then he corrected himself. It shouldn’t make him proud that some hick thinks his black eye looks cool.

Dallas can hardly see out the windshield, it's snowing so hard now. He wonders vaguely if they picked him up just to kill him, he can’t bring himself to care. If some cowboy wants to smash his head in with a sledge hammer and bury his body in the snow, so be it. At least he’d stop feeling so bad.

“So Dallas, are you from Dallas?” The man has a hint of a smirk on his face and Dallas doesn’t know how much he should say.

“I’m from the North East.” He decides shortly.

“Come on Dad! That’s why he’s got the cool accent.” The two days say much else to him for the rest of the drive, seeming to sense his unease. Dallas isn't surprised when they pull into a less than optimal neighborhood, he wouldn’t have thought these people were living on the lap of luxury. The truck pulls up to a house with a couple kids outside sledding down a small mound of snow. Dallas felt a spike of nervousness in his stomach as they got out of the car. He could take Sodapop if it came down to a fight, though he didn’t think he was the fighting type, what with the arm around his shoulders. A group of boys on the other hand? He was unsure, especially with the way that the big one was looking at him.

“Hey kids, this is Dallas, but he ain’t from Dallas.” The kids all looked at him with varying degrees of curiosity.

“Well howdy!” The one with the tribal tattoos said and Dallas couldn’t help but to scowl. Where did he get off doing shit like that? “You look friendly, Jesus.” The bigger boy slaps him in the head at that.

“Shut up Matthews, you keep talkin’ like that and my Momma’ll have your head.”

“I keep talkin’ like this and my own Momma’ll have my head.” He laughed to himself and all Dallas could do was stare, that same sense of unease sitting on his chest. Why did he do this? Why’d he have to go with this cowboy? He couldn’t have just braved the cold, huh?

“Well Dallas, why don’t we getcha inside, huh? Maryanne would have a fit if she knew our guest was freezin’ to death.” Dallas didn’t even have time to wonder who that was before he was being pulled by Sodapop into the dilapidated house.

It smelled good. That was the first thing he noticed. He hadn’t smelled food like that in ages. The houses he used to frequent smelled like stale beer and dried urine, all masked over with cigarettes. His mouth waters and he can’t help it. He turns to see Sodapop giving him an amused look.

“She’s real good at cookin’.”

“Who?”

“My Momma.” Another phantom ache pulls at his chest. He must have looked pitiful because Sodapop pulls him a little closer and gives him a strange look. “Do you miss *your* Momma?” It’s a strange question for a stranger to ask and Dallas wants to hate him for the memories it conjures up. The last memory he has of his own Mother is the day she died, his father’s hands around her throat. He’d watched, hidden under their raggedy couch as her legs had stopped twitching. He’d gotten out of there real fast, before his father could finish him off too.

That wasn’t the reason he left though.

“She’s dead.” He says shortly. “Ain’t nothin’ to miss about that.” Sodapop looks taken aback as he leads him into the kitchen.

“You can still miss her if you wanna.” Dallas doesn’t say anything, just looks up at the two women preparing food in the kitchen. One looked a lot like Sodapop, smile and all. The other one had dark curly hair and was laughing infectiously. Soda’s mom smiles when she looks up.

“Oh, who’s this?”

“We’re bringin’ home strays again honey.” Mr. Curtis says from behind Dallas and he can’t help but to startle, thinking back on the grown men who messed up his face so bad.

“This is Dallas!” Sodapop exclaims, grinning like crazy. He’s dangerously close to bursting Dallas’s eardrums.

“Hello Dallas, good to meet you. My name is Maryanne and this is Carolina.” Carolina waves from the kitchen.

“That’s Keith’s Momma.” Soda whispers to him. “The loud one outside.” Dallas nods absently, noting that Keith did look like his mom. “His sister is on the couch with Ace but you’ll get to know everyone in a minute probably.”

“We’re almost finished with supper.” Maryanne says. “Soda, why doncha go get everyone outside to come in?” Soda grins, nodding and scampering off. Dallas suddenly feels nervous, he was in here alone with three adults, none of which he knew very well. “Darrel, can you get my things out of the med cabinet?” She asks it sweetly, but Dallas can’t help but to feel nervous. Should he be nervous?

“Sure thing hon.” He leaves and then she turns to Dallas, smiling sweetly. He feels his eyes go wide but he can’t seem to stop himself from flinching back.

“Come take a seat over here honey, we’ll get that nasty cut on your face cleaned up.” He doesn’t say anything back, doesn’t even move. “It’s alright, it’ll just take a second and it’ll make you feel a whole lot better.” He sits in the rickety kitchen chair near the table, eyes tracking her and Mr. Curtis who comes in with a box of medical supplies. She puts a light hand on his knee, easy and grounding while she pulls out some gauze and alcohol wipes. He knew the cut was bad and that there was blood on his collar but he figured he would live, Maryanne was acting like he was in danger of dying. “You mind?” She asks, raising up the wipe to show him exactly what she’s going to do. “Might sting a little bit.” He nods slowly and she gets to work.

Luckily, Dallas isn’t any stranger to pain. He’s used to it and he doesn’t even flinch. However, he does keep watching the way her hands move and the actions of the people in the kitchen. He may be wrong, but it doesn’t look like any of them have any intention to hurt him. Quite the opposite if she’s cleaning up the cut on his face. It came from a broken bottle, they were aiming for his eye.

He can’t relax fully. Not until Sodapop is coming up behind him and telling his Momma that the boys outside won’t come in for nothing. “Does that feel better, Dally?” He asks, boyish innocence peeking through his overall concern. Dally? Nobody had ever called him that before, not that he was addressed by his name often in New York. Not by his parents or the drug overlords he delivered for.

“A little.” He says quietly, trying not to seem like the weakling everyone always claimed he was.

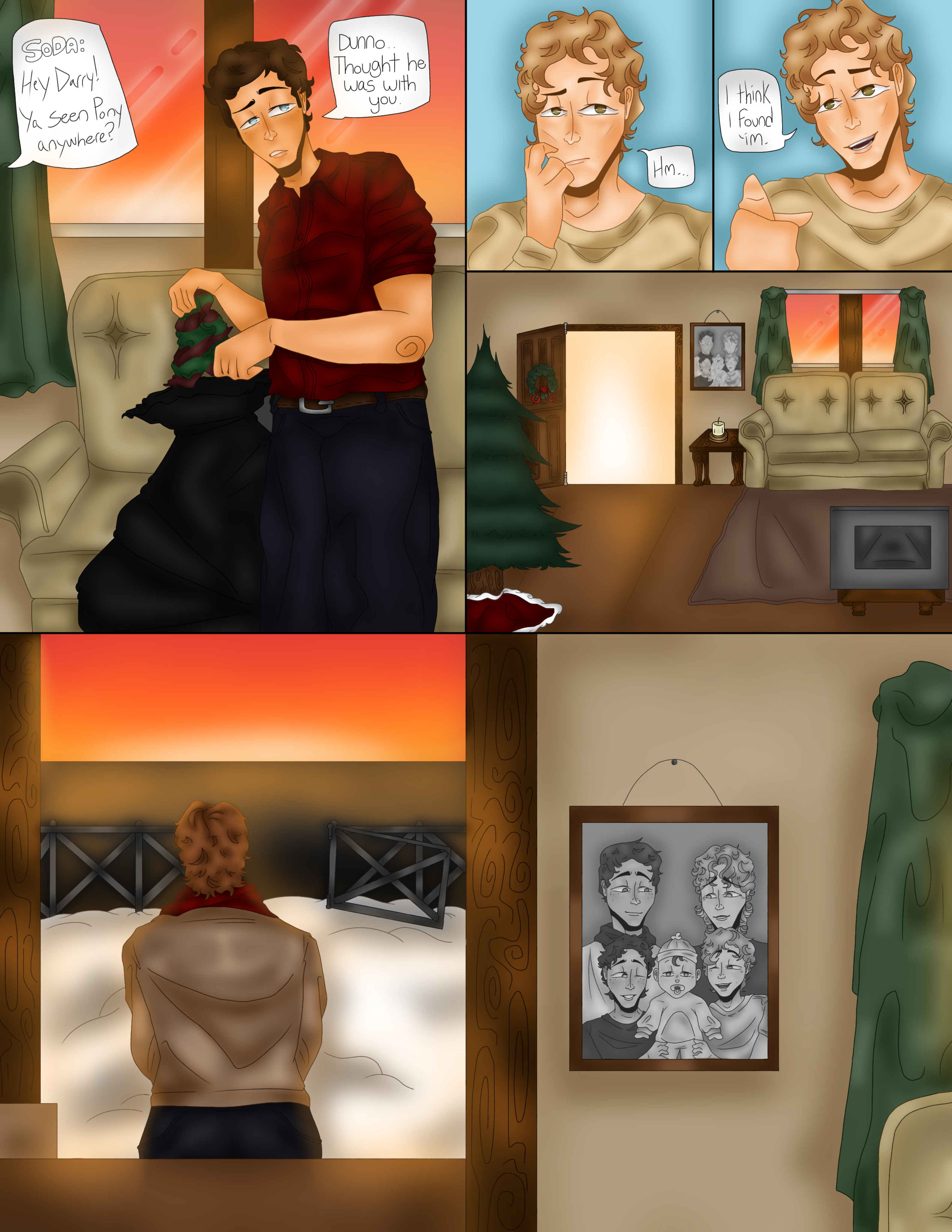
“My Momma’s real good at it. When I fell off my bike, she helped me clean up my knees. I still got the scars!”

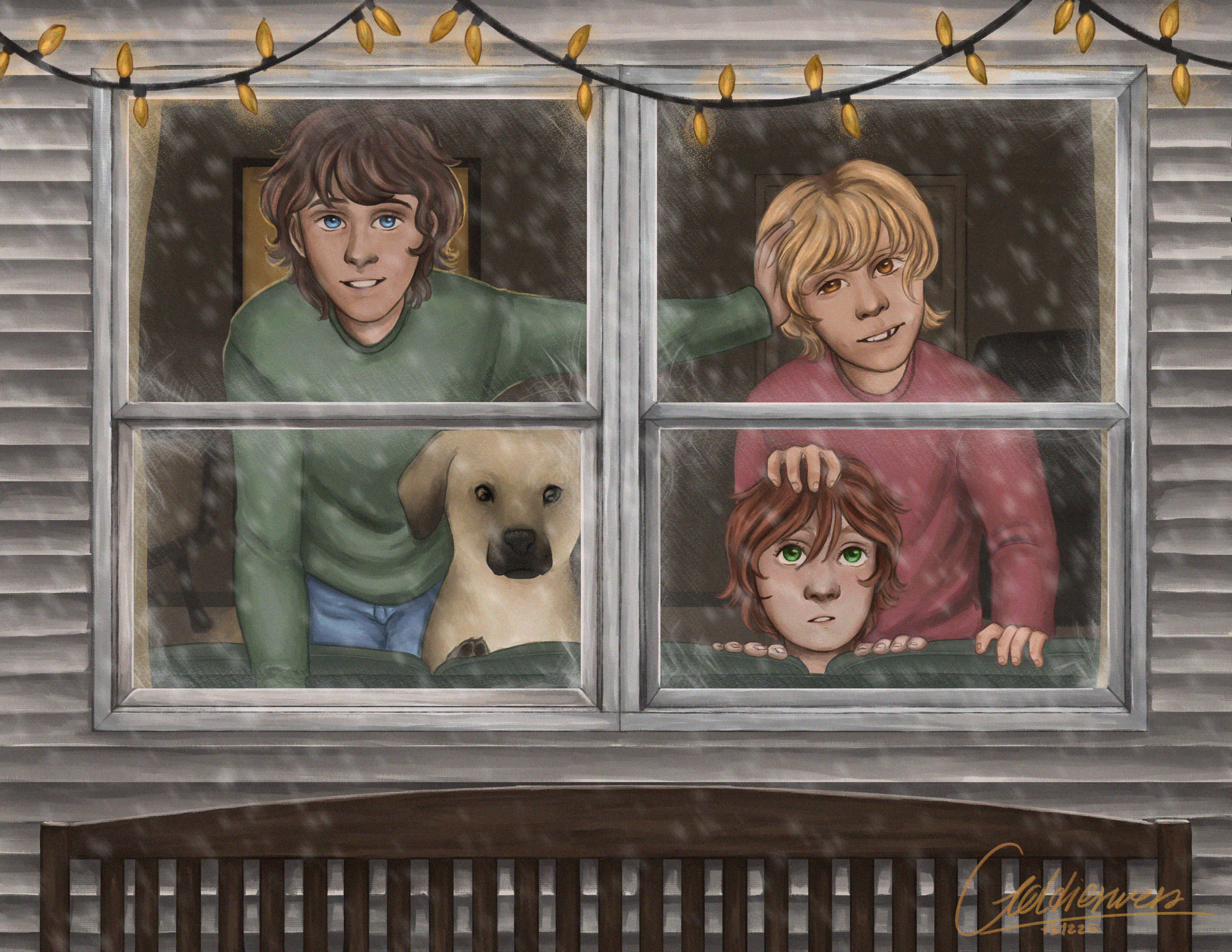
Maryanne smiles. “Soda, why don’t you sit next to him until I’m done?”

“Sure!” Soda says easily, taking a seat next to him. Dallas lets out a breath he was holding in, managing to look up at Maryanne. She smiled knowingly at him, as if she was aware that Soda’s presence would help him more than anything. “Hey Momma?” Soda asks again and Dallas glances back and forth between Maryanne and her son. “You think Dally could stay for Christmas too? Maybe help us with the tree and stuff? Like Darry does?”

“Yeah honey, if Dallas wants to stay, then that should be just fine.” Soda turns to look expectantly at him and Dallas can’t help the slight grin that comes to his face as he looks back and forth between Soda and his Momma. He doesn’t feel the same distrust that did before. Maybe things would be okay here.

“I can stay.”


SODA: Hey Darry! Ya seen Pony anywhere?
Dunno.. Thought he was with you.
Hm...
I think I found 'im.


Goldiewers
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Soc Christmas

hansrillow on tumblr

Christmas was not a foreign concept to Randy, by any means. It was just…unfamiliar. He heard about it every year in school, obviously, and he sort of remembered some of the basics. But none of it ever really made a lot of sense to him, with the man watching you all year and the kissing plant, and all the information he had on these holidays were the crafts they made in elementary school and fumbling the words in Christmas music class recitals.

Point being, he felt like the first person to land on the moon, sometimes, except the moon was filled with people who all already understood each other. And Randy was there, the freak in the spacesuit trying to sneak through crowds of people in regular clothes.

That's how it feels while he's making his way to the patio door of Bob's buddy's house during his annual Christmas party. Bulky and out of place and swimming the smell of that spiked egg-drink until he gets a hand on the door and is stumbling onto the porch. Holy it had been warm in there, the air nipping at his face was more than welcome, even if he had to turn to the side to keep his face from going numb.

A smoke would help—that was actually what he came out here for, not that it seemed to matter with the football team smoking in the kitchen. It was the best excuse he had to get a few minutes to himself.

While he's pulling his cigarettes out of his jeans pocket, the patio door slid open, sending a loud thunk into the near-silent air as it closed. Randy jumps and drops his cigarette carton, smacking his elbow hard on the porch railing when he tries to catch it. "Ow," he groaned involuntarily, pulling it close to his body, "motherf—"

The guy is standing in front of the door, blocking the light seeping out from the dining room, laughing. Quietly, but loud enough for Randy to hear. "Guess that's why they call it the funny bone, right?"

It would be funny if it wasn't his cigarettes that fell out into snow and pain wasn't radiating up his arm, or maybe if he'd been able to stomach more of whatever Bob had been drinking. "Hilarious," he grumbles.

The figure shakes his head as Randy picks up the cigs, shaking the water out of them. "Man—"

"Here."

The guy walked into the beam coming from one of the outdoor lights, offering Randy a cig from his own pack. Randy's finally able to get a good look at him and it's—Darrel Curtis, Paul's buddy. He recognizes him from the football team, mostly. A senior this year, contender for Boy of the Year based on what Randy has heard. He doesn't really know what that means, it's only his first year in Will Roger's, but it sounds pretty important. Being The Boy of the Year seems…sort of impressive, if it wasn't totally worthless. Maybe it helped with college.

"Thanks," Randy murmured, taking it and shaking his own pack out again. They were a goner—he chucks them onto the railing and lights his cigarette, offering it to Darrel afterwards. He refuses and thanks Randy anyway. Didn't make a lot of sense to have a pack and not smoke, but Randy supposes he can't judge, he's probably done weirder things. They're quiet for what feels like a solid minute.

Randy isn't really sure what to say. He only knows that Darrel is a greaser who plays football, and Randy sure didn't know anything about football except that Bob's talking to some JV cheerleader in the house right now. "Your family excited for Christmas?" he asks just to ask.

"Huh? Oh, yeah," Darrel nods, sounding a little surprised. "Yeah. I got my youngest brother a book he's been waiting for someone to return to the library for, like, a month now and my other brother a skateboard. He'll probably break an arm or something, but," Darrel shrugs with a lopsided smile, his eyes crinkling at the outside corners. "You?"

"Oh, I don't—" Randy started, then stops, opening his mouth and closing it a couple times. "I don't have siblings."

"Right," Darrel nods. "You're friends with Bob, ain't it? You here with him?"

Randy nods, blowing smoke out his nose. "Yeah, I just…I dunno. Wanted to come outside for a minute."

Darrel nods, letting them lapse into silence for another minute. Randy finds himself getting jealous or—or self conscious, maybe, that he feels like he can't not fill the silence, sometimes. Lots of the time. Maybe learning to like silence would be his New Year's Resolution.

When he looks over, Darrel is looking at him. Randy does his best not to fidget until he looks away. "Yeah," Darrel murmurs, playing with his carton of cigs. "I needed a break too."

"From the party?"

He shrugs. "It's loud, I lost the friends I came with, everyone else is…too soc-ey. Could feel myself flouderin' trying to remember what filet mignon and fondue is, I just had to beat it."

"Yeah," Randy nods. "I know what you mean."

"You do?" Darrel huffs. More surprised than judgemental, which surprises Randy more than he knows it should. His eyebrows are pinched together when Randy looks up at him.

"Yeah," he says after another second. "With the—what do people even eat for Christmas? Goose?"

"Hell if I know," Darrel laughs, drawing some stick figures in the snow on the porch's railing. "My Christmas dinners are usually…a rotisserie chicken that we eat off of for a week."

Randy nods along. He was pretty sure at least that Bob's family had a goose every year.

"Ain't mean to sound—ungrateful or anything for bein' here," Darry mumbles after another long second, like Randy's about to scold him. "Just that…my Christmases were nothin' like this growing up. It's like I ain't have anything in common with 'em about—about piles of gifts or big dinners. And we sure as hell never got dressed up, just church once in a while. And I'm pretty sure the church we went to as a kid ain't anything like theirs, we didn't wear suits that you grow out of every year. And I'm pretty sure I ain't even in the right tax bracket to go to theirs."

Randy raised an eyebrow. "Yours really weren't anything like theirs?"

"Hell no," Darrel laughed, "never this fancy. Was always more about my family than the—the dinners and the piles of presents."

After another second, Randy can feel his eyes on him. He'd mostly meant the churches, but supposes that the statement does apply to the Christmases, too. Christmas was Christmas, wasn't it?

"What about you?"

"Oh—" Randy startled, using his cigarette as an excuse to think for a second. "Um—I'm—I don't do Christmas. I just, um, come to the parties sometimes 'cause my friends want me to."

He watches Darrel blink a few times, considering. It makes Randy second guess even bringing it up—it was stupid, maybe, to think that Darrel growing up poor meant they had something *in common, that he'd get it. "Oh," is all he says, continuing his little drawings in the dusty snow. It doesn't sound bad, though, so Randy keeps going.*

"Yeah. Makes me feel like a dang alien, sometimes, y'know?"

It pulls a laugh out of him, and he's half sure he hears Darrel agree. It makes his heartrate slow some. "I mean—" Randy huffs when Darrel doesn't say anything else, "my parents started doing presents for Hanukkah a couple years ago? But it's not—it's socks. No piles, nothing that exciting. This year I got some candy, which was cool, I guess. But before that it was just gelt."

"What's that, again?"

"Oh, that's the—they're like chocolate coins."

Darrel nods in his peripheral vision with a hint of a smile. "That still sounds more like a lot of my Christmases than this stuff. I think the biggest gift I ever got was a bike, and me and my brother had to share it 'cause that was the only way my parents could afford it. Otherwise it was clothes when I was little and razors when I started to shave with maybe a fun gift or two and some candy split between us kids."

"That blows," Randy says, screwing up his face sympathetically.

"Not really," Darrel shakes his head. "I liked hanging out with my brothers and cousins in pajamas all day and my mom making us cinnamon rolls for breakfast. Even when we went to church sometimes for Midnight Mass and all'a that, I just liked talking to people and catching up. I never felt like I was missin' anything. Not until I, well—"

Randy blows out a breath. "Yeah. I don't feel like I'm missing anything, I mean… I don't get it. With how a tree and ornaments connect to the—the magic baby thing—?"

Darrel cut him off with a loud laugh, then slaps his hand over his mouth like it surprised him. He's still laughing when he shakes his head. "I dunno, man, I just grew up with it. I don't know where that stuff started either, but it's fun when you've got brothers. One time me and Soda colored a bunch of rocks black and convinced Ponyboy he got nothin' but coal for Christmas."

"How'd he handle it?"

"My dad was so mad, he made us watch him open his gifts once he stopped crying. And then my mom gave us all the burnt shit for breakfast. So worth it, though, to this day it's still one of the best tricks we've pulled."

Laughing, Randy shakes his head. Stuff like that makes him jealous over not having siblings sometimes, as much as he hates to admit it. Holidays in general would probably be more fun if it wasn't him and his grandma staring at each other over Passover, cousins he barely knows making small talk about college or their fancy or whatever. Holidays were always formal, and he couldn't help but wonder if having a sibling would make them feel less…impersonal.

"That's funny," Randy stubs out his cigarette on the porch railing. He can see Darrel press his lips together and slides some snow over the mark. "Your brothers are…Soda and Ponyboy? And you're Darrel?"

"Yeah," Darrel scoffs, but he's smiling. "Curse of being the oldest, right?"

Randy shrugs. Darrel shrugs back and they are quiet for another moment before Randy takes a big breath and looks at him. "Can I ask you something?"

Darrel nods, and it takes him another moment to say anything.

"Do you ever feel like…people obviously know this thing about you, and no one talks about it. Except you all know and they're ignoring it and you've gotta be careful not to be too weird otherwise then it becomes a problem and it's almost like—like, I dunno, you being here at all is…"

"Conditional?" Darrel raises an eyebrow at him. Randy nods. "Yeah. Do you?"

"Yeah," he mumbles. "Like…say the wrong thing or question what they're doing too much and I'm gonna get…well, I dunno, lose all my friends."

Darrel frowns down at his shapes. "You think that?"

Randy bristles a little—he didn't need to prove anything to Darrel, he was still a soc, just…less of one, maybe, than Bob or David or Paul or—but when Randy looks up, Darrel is looking at him with soft eyes, like he's really curious. So Randy nods with a little shrug.

"Yeah. It's like I don't really—I mean, I live in the same neighborhood as them, I go to school and play sports with 'em, but I'm not the same. And everyone knows it, so sometimes I gotta just suck it up and pretend I don't care that I don't get school off for my holidays and they do.

Or I can't complain that I have to do homework during them because sometimes they have homework on the same weekend as Easter."

Darrel stays quiet for another long moment, chewing on his lip. "I always thought that a Soc was a Soc. I didn't know—was it always like this for you?"

Randy nods. "Yeah, ever since I started school, I feel like. I remember—in kindergarten, I didn't really get Christmas trees, and the teacher asked me what my family did. And some kid asked me why I didn't get presents when we light candles. I said, 'I dunno, we just don't,' and they said I must be a bad kid, then. It's dumb now, but I was so upset when I went home. I was kind of a brat, I told my parents that I wanted to do Christmas because those are what the good kids have."

"That's ass," Darrel frowns. "I'm sorry."

Randy shrugs. "Happens. I grew out of it, stopped caring about what they do. My parents started doing presents when I started middle school anyway. But I never wanted a—a knockoff version of Christmas, I wanted to do it the same way my grandparents and their grandparents and their grandparents did it. Y'know?"

"I think I do," Darrel nods. He's staring out over the back yard, eyebrows pushed together a bit. "Soc Christmases never felt right to me, anyway, you sure ain't missing out on anything. A few years back, I had a friend complaining 'cause he didn't get football cards, he got baseball cards, and passed them on to me when his parents got him football cards to make up for it. I dunno, just feels…lonely and hollow to be worried about that, let alone treatin' me like their junk drawer. Y'know?"

Randy nods, watching the snow land on his sneakers and thinking for a second. "Yeah. I had stuff like that growing up. Hand-me-down gifts that my friends didn't want."

"Yeah, it's just—" Darry sighs, his eyebrows pinching together. "I just don't know if I want to get used to this. I don't want—"

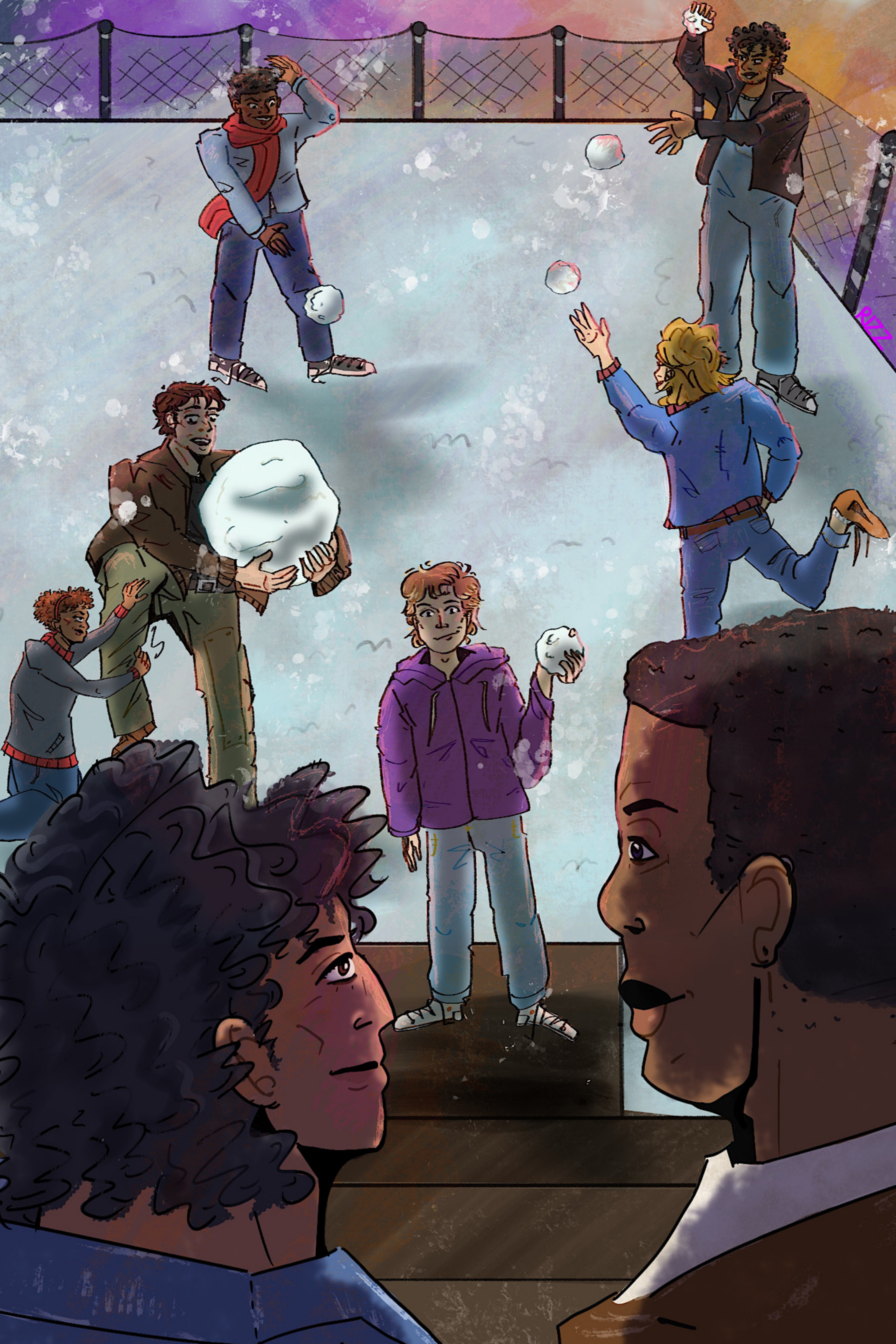
The sliding door crashes open, bouncing when it hits the end of it's track, and the music fills the air again. "Darry!" a tall boy blocking the light calls out. "C'mon, man, you're missing—"

"Yeah, I'm comin'!" Darrel calls back, rolling his eyes and turning toward Randy. "Hey, what was your name, again? You go to Will Roger's, right?"

"Randy," he nods. "I'm in tenth grade."

Darrel sticks his hand out, which Randy tentatively shakes. “Darry Curtis. I’ll see you around school, yeah?”

Randy can’t help but smile and nod again, like he’s a kid that just got picked first for kickball. “Yeah, okay,” he nods.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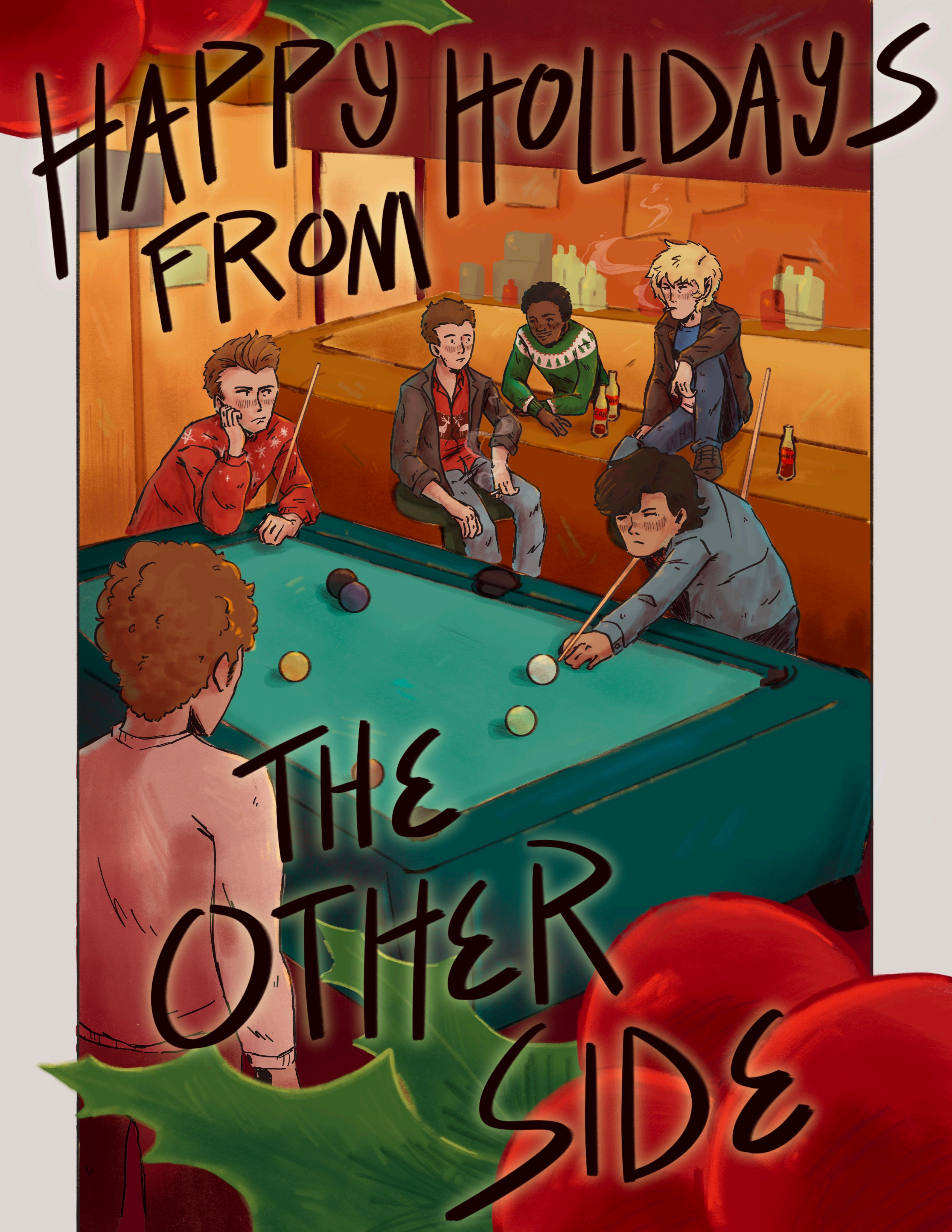

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM
THE
OTHER
SIDE

Mod:

Name: Alaska
Pronouns: She/they
Blurb: I've been drawing since I was in middle school and I've been writing stories for even longer. I always wanted to be able to create something for a widespread audience that would invoke some sort of emotion in people—be it something positive or something more vulnerable. It's my honor to host the Winter's Gold Zine!
Socials: @alaskan-wallflower on Tumblr and Discord, @subzerostardust on Bsky :)

Artists:

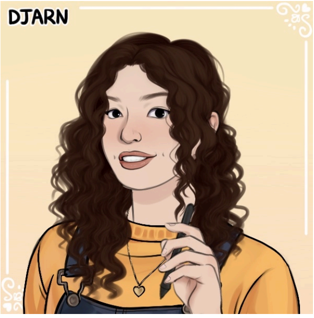
Name: Rizz
Pronouns: they/them, 23.
Socials: tumblr: jack-kellys
ao3: rizzjackkellys, my government name of course
ko-fi: fizzdraws
twt: rizzdraws
Blurb: excited to be joining the zine as an artist, since my writing focus will be more honed in on Outsiders Week on tumblr. i have a new ish kofi and have taken commissions and am taking them currently but i post lots of art on my blog dw. mostly focused in on the curtis gang! that is where my loyalties lie. happy to be a part of this!!

Name: awsten/astro
Pronouns: he/him
Socials: @/brainwasheddd on discord and tumblr
Blurb: I started doing digital art when I was about 14, and I've been experimenting with my style ever since. I love the outsiders and I'm super excited to participate in the zine, it's my first time doing something like this!

Name: Perses
Pronouns: They/he
Blurb: Hey, I'm Perses. I (like most of you) fell in love with The Outsiders in 7th grade. Since then I've read/watched Rumble Fish, Tex, That Was Then, This is Now and I really dislike Hawkes Harbor. Other than that, I'm really into DC comics (Starman, Animal Man, Green Arrow, Secret Six, etc) and I love writing fanfiction for it. I'm 20 years old studying to become a psychiatric nurse practitioner!

Name. Veep
Pronouns: she/her, 29, disabled.
Socials: I'm on tumblr and ao3 at veggiesforpresident where I write and do art!
Blurb: I've been a fan of the Outsiders since I was in middle school and I'm primarily a book fan. I've never been in a zine before so I'm excited! And uhhh a fun fact is my master's thesis is on Star Trek!

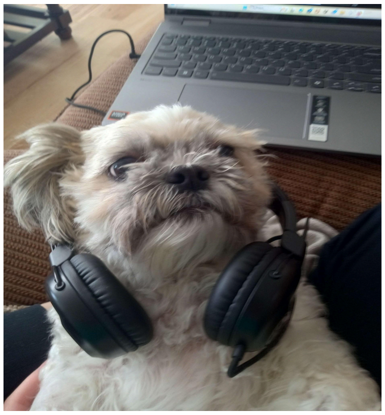
Name: I'm Frankie!
Pronouns: he/him
Socials: my main on tumblr is @/northeasts and my art is under @/goldiesmessI also write on ao3 but I post so rarely I don't see the point in plugging it lmao,
Blurb: Profile picture is, of course, Clarence Clemons and Bruce Springsteen



Name: Ros
Pronouns: She/Her
Socials: A03 (RunningOnSunshine) Tumblr (runningonsunshine19)
Blurb: I'm a writer. I love stories with siblings as the main relationship focus. I'm a follower of Jesus and want all my work to be God-glorifying. My favorite Outsiders character is Darry (as the oldest of three, I just relate to him a ton. Especially since the first time I read the book, I was his age.) Excited for this project!

Name: I'm Nikki,
Pronouns: she/her
Blurb: Hi, people! I'm niktropolis on most socials. I've been in quite a few zines before but it's been a while, so I'm super excited to get back into it! I've been hoping someone would do an outsiders zine so I'm so pumped. It's been my favorite book for a very long time. I'm super excited to see what you talented people create.

Writers



Name: Sky
Pronouns: They/she/he
Socials: skysole on tumblr! easiest way to contact me is that, but my email can be contacted too: skyssole8@gmail.com AO3 is silentcry3435
Blurb: My profile photo is my dog Lola!

NAME: Kay
PRONOUNS: she/her
SOCIALS: (pretty much all the same name)
Tumblr - @kaytheday
A03 - K_the_day
Pinterest - Kaytheday
BLURB: I have loved writing ever since I was little! I was always particularly interested in history, so I love to blend the two. The 60s/70s decades were always a special interest for me so the outsiders fit in nicely. I am excited to be apart of this!

Name: Lee
Pronouns: Anything Interchangeably EXCEPT She/Her
Socials:
(Main) Tumblr: fandomwriter013
(Secondary) Tumblr: fandomwriterlee
Ao3: Witchy_Lee_Hibernates
(Currently Active) Ao3: FandomWriter_013
Blurb: Affectionately nicknamed a zine fiend, I have been a part of several fanzines! One previous Outsiders Fanzine (Stay Gold, my very first) and several MCYT Fanzines, and have run one to near completion (X-Men), and have started another one (MCYT)! I fandom hop like crazy and I make accounts just as fast too!! Excited to be here and I can't wait to work with everyone! / had so much fun working with everyone!

Name: Q/Quinn
Pronouns: I use whatever pronouns <3
Socials:
tumblr: hansrillow
ao3: disloyal_order_of_water_buffaloes (going strong since i was 14 ✊)
ko-fi: hansrillow (i do edits 😌) (this one is new)
Blurb: Hiii i'm Quinn! I'm 25! I work in healthcare doing admin stuff (scheduling and auths) and am a freelance lighting designer/stage manager/dramaturg as well as managing a local technical theatre fellowship forrrr…my 4th year now?
I'm disabled (type one diabetic for coming up on 22 years and i have hEDS)
my fandoms are a little everywhere but i'm Most involved in the outsiders and newsies historically lmao. but i've also been known to engage in marvel + sports